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only way to successfully prosecute such work is to require abutting property owners to pay for the special benefit received.

The merit of a text book is:

1. Its thorough, concise and lucid exposition of the decisions of the courts of various states and the deductions of the legal principles underlying such decisions.

2. An index which enables one to find what he wants.

Mr. Hamilton has met these conditions and is to be congratulated especially upon the fact that he has furnished an index which enables one to know where to find the law bearing upon his subject. An examination of the cases shows that while an assessment is a tax in that it is an enforced contribution from the property owner for the public benefit, yet it is not a tax in the sense that it is a burden, since the property owner receives an equivalent in the shape of the increased value of his property. The overwhelming weight of authority is, therefore, to the effect that the word "tax" as used in our constitutions does not relate to special assessments, but that the legislature, in the exercise of its sovereign authority, has the right to authorize these special assessments for street improvements unless prohibited by the organic law.

So then, unless the legislature is prohibited from authorizing street improvements and requiring the abutting property owners to bear a portion of the expense upon the theory of special benefits, it has the right so to do.

An examination of the cases cited by the author and the principles deduced therefrom clearly shows that the right to assess abutting property owners for the special benefits which they receive by reason of permanent improvements in front of their property is thoroughly intrenched in American jurisprudence, and as to urban property, the "front foot" method is the best practical method by which these benefits may be ascertained. The state that adopts any other policy will find itself far behind in the march of municipal progress.

This book of Mr. Hamilton's is a meritorious one and deserves the careful attention of students of this branch of constitutional and municipal law.

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Kelynack, T. N. (Ed.). *The Drink Problem in Its Medico-Sociological Aspects.* Pp. viii, 300. Price, \$2.50. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907.

The above work is a contribution of the greatest value to the scientific study of the liquor problem. On account of the complexity of the effects of alcoholism in modern society, the plan of the work has been to have a specially qualified medical expert treat of each phase of the problem. The result is a book, which, while not homogeneous in character, has a unique value in that the opinions presented under each topic are those of a scientific expert.

The chapters range from "The Pathology of Alcoholism" to "Alcoholism and Legislation." The general trend of the conclusions reached by the

several experts is all that any advocate of temperance could desire. The position of Professor Sims Woodhead, who writes the chapter on "The Pathology of Alcoholism," that alcohol is a protoplasmic poison, is in general maintained throughout the book. The question whether alcohol can ever be considered a food or not is not directly discussed, but the implication is that it cannot. In several places it is definitely stated that alcohol is not a stimulant, but always a narcotic; its use even as a medicine, therefore, is very limited, and is justifiable only "as a temporary expedient to overcome a crisis."

Concerning these and other medical points in the work the reviewer did not feel competent to judge. Accordingly he submitted the book to a medical friend, who keeps abreast of the latest developments in the medical sciences. The judgment of this man, who is in no way identified with the temperance movement, was: "The book is all right. It is scientific and up-to-date. It would be a good thing if every man could read it. Up to a few years ago I also taught that alcohol was useful as a medicine in the case of certain diseases, but recent experiments, tests with blood-pressure instruments and the like, seem to disprove this."

Upon the purely social aspects of the liquor problem the book is not as complete as one could desire. In general, the statistics cited are not as full and complete as they should be. This is especially true of the chapter on "The Criminology of Alcoholism." Foreign statistics are rarely referred to; for example, the extensive and valuable work of the "American Committee of Fifty to Investigate the Liquor Problem" is scarcely mentioned. Also one or two absurd statistical errors have crept into the text. For example, on page 4 this statement occurs: "At present we [Great Britain and Ireland] use about fourteen gallons of absolute alcohol a year, per individual." On page 131, however, we are told that the amount of absolute alcohol consumed annually per inhabitant in the United Kingdom is only 8.17 liters. Such errors may cast unjust suspicion in the minds of some upon an otherwise extremely careful and conservative piece of scientific work.

On the whole, then, the work will be found exceedingly valuable for the scientific student of the liquor problem, and will furnish a mass of useful and reliable facts for the practical temperance reformer.

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Ogden, R. (Editor). *Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin*. Two vols. Pp. 600. Price, \$4.00. New York: Macmillan Co., 1907.

It has rarely been our pleasure to read a work at once so interesting and valuable as this. Two volumes on the life of the famous editor of *The Nation* and *The Evening Post* (N. Y.). Mr. Ogden has performed his work with notable success. He has told, in a really charming way, the life of Godkin through his letters. And these letters cover such a wide range of life, thought and experience, and in such an interesting and vigorous manner, that